Editorial: From Smart Governance to Institutional Resilience

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The present issue of Smart Cities and Regional Development confirms an increasingly important shift in the study of smart cities, digital governance, and regional development. The field is no longer concerned only with the adoption of technologies, the expansion of platforms, or the modernization of infrastructures. It is now asking a more difficult and more mature question: under what institutional, civic, ecological, and ethical conditions does digital transformation actually produce public value? The articles included in Vol. 10 No. 3 (2026) approach this question from different disciplinary and geographical perspectives, from Lithuania, Bhutan, Australia, Morocco, France, Indonesia, Georgia, Haiti, Romania, Moldova and Ukraine, yet they converge around a common argument: smart development is not achieved by technology alone, but by resilient institutions capable of governing complexity and sustaining public trust [1]. The contributions collected here suggest that resilience has become a useful concept for interpreting the contemporary smart city debate.

The opening article, which examines the smart city as an ideological construct through an analysis of SCRD journal publications, offers a necessary moment of reflection for the field itself [2]. It reminds us that the smart city is never a neutral technical formula. It is also a system of values, priorities, actors, and power relations. The article identifies transparency, openness, social inclusion, human rights, equality, environmental protection, quality of life, and efficiency as central values in SCRD's smart city literature. Yet it also points to the risks that accompany this model: cybersecurity vulnerabilities, surveillance, disinformation, and the possible deepening of social and regional divisions. This is an important contribution because it refuses both technological optimism and simple rejection. It suggests that the smart city must be examined as a political and social project, not only as an urban technology agenda. By turning the gaze inward toward SCRD's own intellectual trajectory, it also offers a useful act of self-examination for the journal and for the field.

This reflexive perspective is continued, from a different angle, by the systematic review on green corridors as climate-resilient infrastructure in smart cities [3]. The article makes clear that smartness must not be reduced to digital infrastructure. In the age of climate risk, green corridors, ecological connectivity, biodiversity, urban cooling, and stormwater management become equally important components of intelligent urban planning. The review shows that green corridors can reduce urban temperatures, improve hydrological performance, support biodiversity, and strengthen ecosystem services. Its strongest lesson is that nature-based solutions should not remain decorative or marginal. They must be integrated into the core infrastructure of smart cities. A truly smart city is therefore not only wired, sensorized, and data-driven; it is also shaded, permeable, ecologically connected, and capable of adapting to environmental stress. This article usefully broadens the meaning of smartness by linking digital transformation to ecological design and climate adaptation.

The article on algorithmic overconfidence, financial literacy, and decision quality moves the discussion from urban governance to digital decision-making in financial environments [4]. Its comparative evidence from Morocco and France challenges a common assumption of digital transformation: that automated systems necessarily make decisions more rational. The findings suggest the opposite can occur. Algorithmic tools may reduce some forms of emotional bias, but they can also create excessive cognitive delegation, weakening critical judgment and producing poorer decisions. Financial literacy emerges as a protective factor,

improving decision quality and mitigating excessive trust in automated systems. This contribution is valuable beyond behavioral finance. It speaks directly to smart governance: digital systems require competent users, transparent design, and institutional safeguards. Trust in algorithms must be calibrated and institutionally supported, rather than assumed.

The study of Indonesia's INA-DIGITAL initiative brings the issue back to public administration and platform governance [5]. By examining collaborative digital transformation through organizational readiness, citizen-centric services, and service delivery, the article shows that digital government is not a simple matter of launching a national portal. It requires coordination across institutions, technological interoperability, stakeholder engagement, and adaptive governance. INA-DIGITAL is presented as a flagship initiative in Indonesia's long-term transformation toward 2045, but the article rightly stresses that its success depends on balancing infrastructure readiness with visible service innovation. This is a recurring lesson for all public-sector digitalization: citizens judge transformation not by strategic documents, but by the reliability, accessibility, and fairness of the services they actually receive. The Indonesian case is especially useful because it shows how national digital agendas depend on the often slow work of coordination across agencies and service ecosystems.

The contribution on digital accounting and financial audit as foundations of smart governance adds another essential dimension: accountability [6]. Smart governance cannot be credible if public money remains opaque, delayed, or weakly audited. By discussing digital accounting, AI-based auditing, blockchain, open data, and the historical example of Niko Nikoladze's transparent governance in Poti, the article makes a particularly useful connection between old administrative virtues and new digital tools. Transparency, fiscal discipline, and public oversight did not begin with digital transformation. What digital technologies can do is strengthen these principles through real-time monitoring, predictive auditing, and accessible financial information. This is a salutary reminder that technology is most useful when it reinforces enduring standards of public integrity. The article reminds readers that innovation in governance is meaningful only when it improves the visibility, traceability, and credibility of public finance.

The article on e-governance and digital transformation in Haiti offers a more sobering view of digital reform [7]. Haiti's experience demonstrates that digital ambitions cannot substitute for basic institutional capacity. Fragmented paper-based systems, weak infrastructure, uneven connectivity, low digital literacy, limited coordination, and political instability constrain the modernization of public services. The article is especially important because it resists the seductive language of leapfrogging. Digitalization may help fragile administrations modernize, but only if it is connected to institutional reform, legal frameworks, capacity building, cybersecurity, and inclusion. Otherwise, technology risks becoming another layer of fragmentation. The Haitian case therefore reminds us that smart governance must be sequenced, grounded, and institutionally realistic.

Security and resilience are taken up directly in the article on smart borders and digital corridors in the Romania–Moldova–Ukraine border region [8]. This contribution places smart governance in the context of Europe's eastern flank, where digital interoperability, geospatial data, NATO standards, EU directives, dual-use infrastructure, digital twins, GIS platforms, and cyber-resilient systems become matters of strategic importance. Its central argument is that border regions should not be seen only as peripheries or control zones. They can become integrated security and mobility ecosystems, supporting both civilian development and defense preparedness. At the same time, the article implicitly raises a broader governance challenge: the more powerful border technologies become, the more carefully they must be governed through standards, accountability, proportionality, and democratic

oversight. In this sense, the article expands the smart development agenda from urban management to cross-border coordination, strategic mobility, and regional security.

Finally, the article on the capacity of civil institutions for sustainable development in Ukraine brings the issue to one of the most important questions of our time: how societies remain resilient under crisis [9]. The Ukrainian case shows that institutional capacity is not located only inside formal state structures. It also emerges from civil society, volunteers, charitable organizations, local authorities, digital participation tools, public trust, and civic education. In wartime conditions, when formal institutions are placed under extraordinary pressure, these civic capacities become indispensable. The article's focus on citizen engagement, transparency, legitimacy, digital tools, and sustainable development demonstrates that resilience is not merely technical or military, it is also social, democratic, and moral. This research represents a clear reminder that resilience is produced through social cooperation as much as through formal institutional design.

Taken together, the articles in this issue suggest that the next stage of smart cities and regional development research should be framed around institutional resilience. This means the capacity of cities, regions, and public systems to absorb shocks, govern technologies, preserve public trust, protect rights, maintain accountability, and produce inclusive development under conditions of uncertainty. Digital transformation remains central, but it must be placed within a wider architecture: ecological infrastructure, financial integrity, civic participation, human competence, administrative coordination, and strategic security. What emerges from this issue, therefore, is a more demanding understanding of smartness, one that links innovation to institutional quality rather than to novelty alone.

The intellectual contribution of this issue is therefore not simply to add new case studies to the smart city literature, it is to clarify the standards by which smart development should be judged. A public system is not smart because it uses artificial intelligence, blockchain, sensors, digital portals, or geospatial platforms. It becomes smart when these tools are governed in ways that strengthen transparency, resilience, inclusion, accountability, ecological sustainability, and democratic legitimacy. The real test of smart governance is not technological sophistication, but institutional judgment.

The broader message of Vol. 10 No. 3 (2026) is that smart systems matter, but resilient institutions matter more. Without them, digital transformation remains fragile, green infrastructure remains fragmented, algorithms remain unaccountable, platforms remain underused, financial systems remain opaque, borders remain vulnerable, and civic participation remains episodic. With them, technology can serve its proper role, not as an ideology of novelty, but as an instrument of public value.

The present issue shows that the advancement of smart cities and regional development cannot be assessed solely through the presence of digital tools or technological innovation. Rather, it depends on the ability of institutions to guide these tools in ways that support trust, inclusion, accountability, and sustainability. The articles gathered here illustrate that resilience is not an abstract ideal, but a practical condition for ensuring that digital transformation, ecological planning, financial transparency, civic engagement, and security-oriented governance can generate lasting public value. For this reason, the issue invites readers to view smartness not as a label attached to innovation, but as a quality that emerges when technology is embedded within responsible, adaptable, and legitimate institutions.

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